

Dangar FOBI
Saketa FO 43

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The fact that these wooden cups are found in the Bena Dilele-Kala region is not without interest. Until the present time they had been reported only among the peoples in the region between the Kani and the Sakhum, and certain authors even regarded them as characteristic of the Sahala people. We shall say more on this subject later.

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If cannibalism ever existed, it has disappeared. When questioned about this, the natives as a rule vigorously deny any connection with this barbarous custom, but they do not hesitate to accuse their neighbors of the worst misdeeds. In our opinion, the peoples of the Bena Dilele-Kala region were once anthropophagous and practiced cannibalism until quite recently. It seems probable to us that on a favorable occasion they would not resist temptation even today.

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Geophagy is better known. Children eat earth among all these peoples. Among the Bakhata, Lova, Mowogere, and Wadia, all the natives and especially the women are earth-eaters.



Fig. 86. Bohale Children.
One of them shows signs of
geophagy.

Potter's earth and the clay from the seams of certain termites are very highly prized.

The natives seem to eat earth as a delicacy and perhaps also as a medicine. To call it food would be an exaggeration, for the amount eaten is very small. [Ed., a passage is omitted from the last paragraph, page 150, to the end of the section, page 151.]

[151] Hemp and Tobacco

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276

The consequences of using hemp are more disastrous.

This sad practice, which seems to have been quite widespread among certain peoples, is fortunately on the wane, thanks to the vigorous intervention of the government.

C. Treason

628 Treachery and treason between relatives by marriage were
629 not criminal. The proverb says betraying kins of kins, "weaken
630 kins [194] chiefly on the part of relatives by marriage." Not that
this happened through any fundamental malice towards apart from per-
haps some rare exception. But in case of a war or particularly of
a vendetta, relatives by marriage did not hesitate to betray his in-
law and thus send him to his death.

We shall limit ourselves to giving two case histories which
are well known to the current generation. (1)

1. I do not know exactly when these
events occurred. In any case they date
back to the time of the Independent
State and to the beginning of the occu-
pation.

At the time when the legends just was occupied by the white
"Inimbenile" and that of Idingf by "Bokfngf," some men from
[166] Bokf (Bokfama y'Bele, Bumbwanje) surprised an inhabitant of Bokf
(w'Ingf), killed him, and ate him. Shortly thereafter Lokwa
pw'Byel, a man from Bokf, went to visit his sister Edmf, who was
married to Imbf of w'By'mole of Immf. It happened that the latter
was a maternal uncle of the victim of the Bokf men. Was Lokwa
unaware of this relationship? Or did he trust his brother-in-law?
Whatever the case he was well received. Nevertheless, Imbf had
not forgotten his nephew's assassination and went to inform his close
kin of this good opportunity to avenge the murder. One evening they
broke into the hut that had been placed at the visitor's disposal and
found him there with his sister Edmf and his wife Lompok. The
[24] two women managed to escape, but Lokwa was taken, killed, and
eaten. Naturally, his sister Edmf did not return to her husband, and
there was no question of a restitution of the bride price.

The second case dates from the same period. Two Batwa of
[24] Mbfanga (L'fomf, Bongili), Bokfng and Bokfyngf, surprised
Mhoko Mombf of Bokf in the forest, killed him, and ate him.

[51] Some time thereafter, a man named Boughlagh from the village of the Boughlagh went to Haila to visit his other brother, who was married to Haila's daughter. The latter told him that the village was changed because of the extermination of one of their people by the Boughlagh. He advised him to go [Haila] and hide in the fellow ground but excited men came upon him and revenge themselves on him. He led his brother-in-law there himself. Therefore he knew the exact location of his hiding place and ran to betray him to the others. They searched the fellow ground and easily found poor Boughlagh, who was pitilessly murdered and eaten. His other brother never knew of her husband's treachery; she thought that despite all his precautions, the other inhabitants had discovered her brother's hiding place. (1)

[52] 1. We should not be too astonished that during that period the Europeans did not intervene in these wars, vendettas, massacres, and acts of cannibalism. They let the natives do as they pleased among themselves and demanded only that they leave them alone and render them services and tribute. They had other things to do in those times. The white men Ambat and Sakikak, of whom the natives still speak with respectful fear, were the first to begin punishing acts of barbarism in this region.

[53] This hypocrisy on the part of the husband toward his wife and brother-in-law is due to the presence of two opposing feelings within him -- on the one hand, the love of his family and the feeling of solidarity which engenders hate and the desire for vengeance; on the other, love for his spouse. As these feelings are in complete contradiction with each other, he cannot reconcile them. But at least he can preserve appearances.

[54] This situation is referred to in the following proverb: bokil6 skwiskak, w6ngoyak'eyalo, "if your bokil6 has hidden you, change

THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

grasping the body with his left hand, with his free right hand he draws a great deal of palm wine or ginsu orange, like the heavier victim on the head with the empty gourd, then transfers the body to his right hand. He is now ready for his work which he proceeds to do methodically, sustained by the family wine and the direction of the drum. When he had finished one of the men, a gesture would be made to bring out the body for burial. Just before this is done an animal head is taken down the path, across, goes up in the other direction, then returns; this is said by some to ward off any spirits which might be about. The corpse is now brought out by the three dead.⁷ The grave, a circular hole with a ridge on one side of it, its entrance facing west, had been previously prepared. Five people in the Sangha village have or had seen the actual burying place of an almsman. While the corpse was carried to the grave followed by a crowd, the spectators finished his work. Those who stayed behind took the bodies of the disappointed men and women and divided them among all the participants of the funeral who would subsequently devour everything.

Accompanying the funeral procession to the grave were the old, one or more men or women who were destined to accompany the almsman to his grave and to the other world beyond. In the burial of an almsman witnessed in 1930 at which the conditions of some of the old men were noted, a party of armed men escorted the right of the procession to approach the grave, there was a much battle for a few minutes between two bands of the funeral party, and then the procession gained right of way. In the grave side the legs and sometimes the arms of one dead were broken by heavy clubs to prevent him from escaping. Then stood on the ground the body of the almsman would be placed on the knees of this man, whose arms would be placed around the almsman and securely fastened by driving a peg right through both wrists. Sometimes two alms were then used. If the number of victims was sufficient, alms would be buried alive too, being placed in the grave in the most convenient position, with the corpse on top of them, its weight being sufficient, with the earth filling in the grave, to prevent escape. The almsman was now ready for burial and was placed in the coffin, facing west.⁸ The relatives of the almsman approach, they shake the leaves and stem of a juicy bush known as *adaka* and chewing it, expounding communally on the body while they address it in language somewhat as follows: "You are going to leave us now, we are mourning, for you were a good and wise man, your judgement in matters of justice was without parallel, &c. . . . we wish that you may be happy where you go, have many whom, have many children, look out for us. But don't take with you our power to have children, have us also some of this wisdom of yours, for what you were, we would be." This paper over, the mouth would be clipped off the head of the corpse and replaced by the informed lay, all done so dramatically that the bare head was not seen. The entrance to the

⁷ The body was supposed to have remained in one for some to show that, but actually it was buried privately some other place, a dummy being set up with the mouth on its head, and the surrounding ceremony being conducted with only the dummy in the place of the actual body. The almsman however did allow the body to remain uncovered for the long period, the wine being forced to keep watch in the same house. The Sangha

buried their almsman generally in their houses or the spot where they had been accustomed to eat, keeping the dummy or some other spot further off.

⁸ All burials have particular regard to this same position, those buried in the convenient position having the feet to the west. The entire explanation is that this allows the spirit of the departed to follow the path of the sickening man.